

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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ACTION SY-04

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 ISO-00 SCCT-01 USPS-01 USSS-00 OCE-00

CCO-00 /013 W

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P 081411Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1094

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRETORIA 0079

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ASEC

SUBJ: MAIL BOMB - JOHANNESBURG POST OFFICE

REF: STATE 001692; PRETORIA 0044

1. SOUTH AFRICAN SECURITY POLICE DECLINE TO:

A. IDENTIFY THE NATIONALITY, RELIGION, NAME OR ADDRESS OF
THE ADDRESSEE OF THE BOMB;

B. COMMENT REGARDING THE LOCATION OF ORIGIN FOR MAILING
OF THE BOMB;

C. REVEAL THE NATIONALITY OF THE SUSPECTED PERPETRATORS
OF THE INCIDENT.

2. CONFIDENTIAL SOURCE WITHIN SAP FORENSIC SCIENCE LABORATORY
PROVIDED A/RSO WITH THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

A. THE BOMB WAS ADDRESSED TO A JEWISH FAMILY IN JOHANNESBURG,
THE EXACT IDENTITY OF THE FAMILY BEING UNKNOWN TO SOURCE;

B. THE BOMB WAS POSTED IN ENGLAND;

C. THE BOMB IS BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN THE CREATION OF AL FATAH,
OR ONE OF ITS SUBSIDIARY ORGANIZATIONS;

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D. SOURCE WAS UNABLE TO SPECULATE AS TO ANY REASON WHY THE

PARTICULAR JEWISH FAMILY WAS SELECTED FOR RECEIPT OF THE BOMB;

E. THE ACTUAL TYPE OR AMOUNT OF EXPLOSIVE UTILIZED IN THE BOMB REMAINS UNDETERMINED.

3. SOUTH AFRICAN SECURITY POLICE PROVIDED THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION VIA OFFICIAL CHANNELS:

A. THE BOMB WAS PLACED AMONGST THE PAGES OF A DICTIONARY;

B. IT APPEARS FROM THE ODORS AFTER THE EXPLOSION THAT A DETONATING FUSE MAY HAVE BEEN PRESENT IN THE BOMB; HOWEVER, THIS IS NOT CONCLUSIVE;

C. METAL FRAGMENTS WERE PLACED IN THE BOMB FOR SHRAPNEL EFFECT;

D. THE DICTIONARY WAS PACKED AMONGST SOME "JERSEYS."

E. THE TRIGGER MECHANISM OF THE BOMB OPERATED WHILE THE POST BAGS WERE THROWN ON A PILE. IT APPEARED THAT THE POST BAG CONTAINING THE BOMB WAS ALREADY IN THE PILE AND THE BOMB EXPLODED WHEN ANOTHER POST BAG WAS THROWN ON TOP OF THE PILE.

F. BLAST AND SHRAPNEL EFFECT WERE SMOTHERED TO A LARGE EXTENT BY THE SURROUNDING "JERSEYS" AND OTHER POSTAL BAGS. AS A RESULT OF THIS, AND THE FACT THAT THE POSTAL WORKER WAS SOME DISTANCE AWAY FROM THE EXPLOSION, NO SERIOUS INJURIES OCCURRED.

H. DAMAGE DONE TO THE POST OFFICE CONSISTED OF A NEON LIGHT BEING SHATTERED; THE METAL SCREENING IN THE WALL NEAR THE PILE OF POSTAL BAGS BENT AWAY; AND "PEPPER MARKS" IN THE CEILING FROM THE SMALL METAL FRAGMENTS PLACED IN THE BOMB.

4. THE OFFICIAL SAP REPORT CONCLUDES WITH THE FOLLOWING:

A. THE BOMB EXPLODED AT APPROXIMATELY 2:00 PM ON DECEMBER 31, 1974;

B. AT THE JOHANNESBURG POST OFFICE ON THE CORNER OF BREE AND HARRISON STREETS;
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C. THE METAL FRAGMENTS WERE PROJECTED WITH GREAT FORCE;

D. "IF THE BOMB HAD EXPLODED AS PLANNED - THAT IS, WHEN OPENING THE DICTIONARY (WHICH IS THE LIKELY 'MODUS OPERANDI') SERIOUS INJURY, PROBABLE FATAL, WOULD HAVE BEEN CAUSED TO ANY PERSONS IN THE VICINITY...".
HURD

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 JAN 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975PRETOR00079
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750007-0623
From: PRETORIA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750169/aaaacisc.tel
Line Count: 115
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SY
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 STATE 001692, 75 PRETORIA 0044
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28 AUG 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <28 AUG 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <02 SEP 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MAIL BOMB - JOHANNESBURG POST OFFICE
TAGS: ASEC
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006